

**Proposed Commercial Vertical Launch Complex at J. F. Kennedy Space Center:
Project Description and Environmental Assessment Information
February 2008**



**National Aeronautics and Space Administration
John F. Kennedy Space Center
Environmental Program Office
Kennedy Space Center, FL 32899**

Introduction

NASA is proposing a project which would allow for the development and operation of a Commercial Vertical Launch Complex (CVLC) on approximately 200 acres of Kennedy Space Center. The land use agreement would be with a non-NASA entity. This announcement provides a brief description of the proposed project, describes the associated Environmental Assessment that will be used to evaluate the proposed action, and begins the solicitation of public input related to this proposal. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is a cooperating agency with NASA on this proposal.

A key concept of the notional CVLC is shared use of the facility by multiple entities involving several potential launch vehicles and associated infrastructure. The complex concept includes two separate launch pads with two potential vehicle integration approaches (horizontal and vertical). It also includes a common rocket and ground support test facility, and common propellant storage for multiple users. The potential launch vehicle types supported would have up to 2 million pounds thrust, and use standard or modified liquid propellants. Some vehicles could utilize small, strap-on solid rocket boosters.

In 2007, NASA commissioned the “KSC Vertical Launch Site Evaluation Study” to evaluate potential CVLC site locations on KSC property. The siting evaluation criteria included over-flight restrictions, available launch azimuths, distance from residential areas, minimum contiguous acreage, proximity to existing roads and utilities, hurricane storm surge inundation risk, proximity to public use areas, and preliminary environmental factors. Based on this study, NASA selected two potential sites for further evaluation. These are shown as Alternative Site 1 and Alternative Site 2 in the figure on page 3. Alternative 1 is located along the Atlantic coast south of Shuttle launch complex 39A and north of the Atlas launch complex 41. The Alternative 2 site is located more inland, east state of State Route 3, north of State Route 406, and south of the Scrub Ridge Trail Road.

Why is an Environmental Assessment (EA) being prepared?

NASA is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to assess the impacts that the implementation of this proposal might have on the environment. Under NEPA, “environment” includes the physical (air, water, land) and biological (plants, animals) environments, and human relationships to the environment (i.e., archeological, cultural, health, safety, jobs, housing, schools, and aesthetics). While NEPA does not require that preparing an EA includes gathering public comments (scoping) to define issues that should be analyzed, NASA has concluded that gathering such information is in the best interests of the public and the mission. Therefore, NASA is conducting a series of meetings to inform and involve the public. Following scoping, a Draft EA will be prepared which will be available for public review and written comment. That input will be considered in the preparation of the Final EA.

Within the EA, a range of reasonable alternatives will be compared and contrasted. The alternatives identified to date include the two locations shown in the figure, and No Action, which is the alternative of not implementing the proposal. The EA will evaluate a variety of factors associated with each Alternative and the degree to which they could impact the environment. The assessment will, at a minimum, include:

- local job market and economy
- water and air quality

- wetlands and other habitats
- wildlife and plants
- State and federally protected species
- traffic and utilities
- archaeological and historical resources
- public use (hunting, fishing, Playalinda Beach access, etc.)

The environmental consequences (short and long-term) of the Alternatives will be compared and contrasted. Construction and ground support operations impacts will be assessed in this EA; impacts from specific vehicles/programs will be evaluated individually by future users of the site as their detailed plans develop.

Schedule

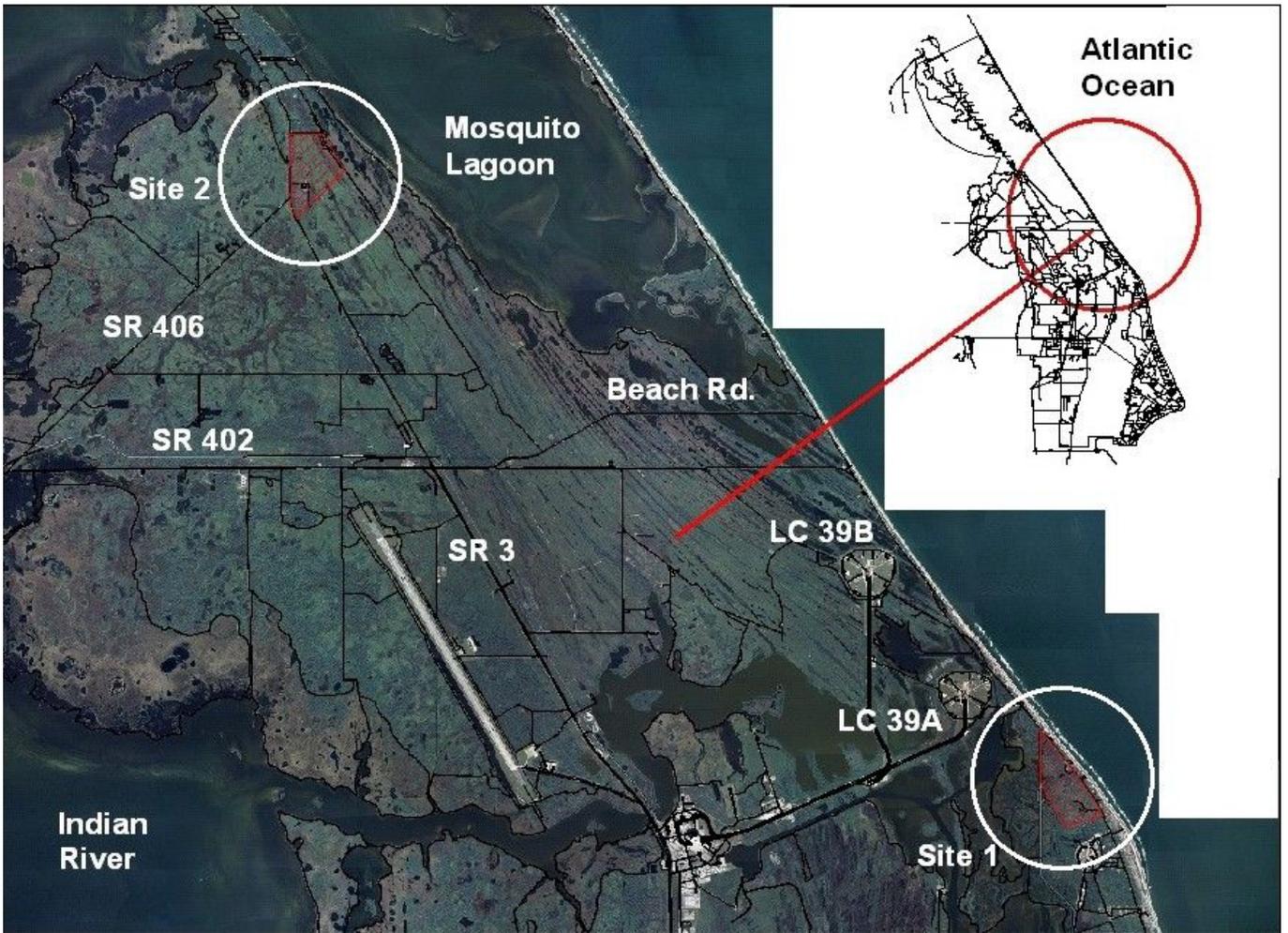
The Draft EA is scheduled for release in late spring or early summer 2008, and will be made available for public comment. The Final EA is anticipated to be completed in fall 2008.

NASA seeks to actively involve the public in its decision-making process regarding the CVLC. Input from the public is encouraged, welcomed, and appreciated. To provide comments to NASA regarding the issues that should be addressed during the preparation of this EA, or to obtain additional information, the following options are available:

1. Via the World-wide Web: <http://environmental.ksc.nasa.gov/projects/ksc-cvlc.htm> (operational on February 22, 2008)
2. Attend one of the following scoping meetings:
 - February 25, 2008, Titusville City Council Chamber, 1 p.m. and 6 p.m.
 - February 28, 2008, New Smyrna Beach Public Library, 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.
3. Via E-mail: KSC-CVLC@nasa.gov

Availability of the EA for public review and comment will be announced on the website, and in the Florida Today and Daytona Beach News Journal newspapers.

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Locations of Alternative Sites 1 and 2 for the proposed Commercial Vertical Launch Complex on Kennedy Space Center, Florida.